A

LETTER

TO A

METHODIST PREACHER,

ON HIS

ENTRANCE INTO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY:

CONTAINING

ADVICES

ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

1. *The Spirit in which he should perform his Work.*
2. *Choice of Texts.*
3. *Behaviour in the Pulpit.*
4. *Behaviour in his Circuit.*
5. *Behaviour in the House where he lodges.*
6. *The Cultivation of his Mind.*
7. *Marriage,—and the Management of Children.*
8. *The Preservation of his Health.*

WITH A

POSTSCRIPT,

IN WHICH

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PREACHERS,

AND THE

NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK IN WHICH THEY ARE ENGAGED,

ARE BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

A FEW DIRECTIONS TO THE PEOPLE,

HOW THEY MAY PROFIT MOST BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD PREACHED.

By ADAM CLARKE.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. ii. 15.

Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

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1800.

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TO THE

JUNIOR PREACHERS

(BOTH LOCAL AND TRAVELLING)

IN THE

METHODIST CONNEXION,

THIS PAMPHLET

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR

FELLOW LABOURER

IN THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD,

ADAM CLARKE.

The Author begs the Reader to pardon the following miſtakes, as well as all the other imperfections of the Pamphlet.

Page 11, line 15, *for* theſe *read* thoſe.
—— 32, —— 25, *for* is *read* its.
—— 35, —— 7, *after* never *add* to.
—— 41, —— 15, *for* led *read* fed.

PREFACE.

THIS Letter, in miniature, was originally drawn up for the uſe of a young Man in London, who in the year 1797, gave up ſome very flattering worldly proſpects for the privilege of proclaiming the Goſpel of the Grace of God, as an itinerant Methodiſt Preacher.

Several judicious friends who ſaw my plan, urged and encouraged me to fill it up and publiſh it, as ſomething of that kind was much wanted, and was likely to be very uſeful both to the junior Preachers and to the People. Submitting to their judgment, more than to my own, I reluctantly ſend this Pamphlet abroad, earneſtly praying the Lord Jeſus, that it may do good.

It will be eaſily perceived, that ſeveral points of conſiderable importance are but ſlightly handled; and that many additions and improvements might be made. Of this I am fully aware: and could eaſily

enlarge

enlarge it, and with profitable matter too, were I not convinced that it is large enough already. If this first edition be well received, I shall not find it difficult to prepare a second for the press more worthy the attention of the persons to whom it is addressed.

Several matters in the Eighth *Advice, I have designedly deferred, hoping to notice them particularly in a "Dissertation on the Use and Abuse of Tea, Coffee, and Spirituous Liquors," which, if it please God to spare my life and health, I may some time or other publish.*

A. C.

BRISTOL, May 26, 1800.

A

LETTER

TO A

METHODIST PREACHER, &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU are engaged in the moſt important work in the univerſe. Commiſſioned by God Almighty, you are ſent to explain and enforce that Myſtery which had been hidden from former ages; that glorious ſcheme of ſalvation, the redemption of a loſt world by the incarnation, ſufferings, and death of Jeſus Chriſt. Notwithſtanding the work is extremely *awful* and *difficult*, you may nevertheleſs take encouragement from the *honour* God has conferred upon you in calling you into it, to go forward with pleaſure and delight; and this is requiſite, that you may not be too much depreſſed by the trials neceſſarily attendant on an employment which will ever be oppoſed by the wickedneſs of men, and the malice of demons. But, while you take encouragement from the above conſideration, a proper ſenſe of the *awfulneſs* of the work, which ſhould ever reſt upon your mind, will keep you from being elated by your *honour*, as there is ſuch a poſſibility of miſcarriage, and ſuch a danger of being

unfaithful.

unfaithful. However, theſe two conſiderations will ſerve mutually to counterbalance each other, and cauſe you to *rejoice* before God with *trembling.*

As you have, no doubt, deeply conſidered the nature of the work, and counted the coſt; and have deliberately choſen your preſent employment, at the certain loſs of every worldly proſpect, and at the hazard of your life; permit one who has learned experience on a variety of points connected with a Preacher's uſefulneſs, and at no ordinary expence either, (having had the pain to be often inſtructed through the medium of his own blunders) to give you the following Advices.

I. *Concerning the* SPIRIT *in which you ſhould do your Work.*

On this or any other point, I do not wiſh to repeat any thing which you find in the *Larger Minutes*: the ſtudy of which I earneſtly and affectionately recommend to you; as you will find in them the *wiſdom* and *experience* of your predeceſſors in the miniſtry *condenſed*; which, next to the ſcriptures, will prove a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.

Remember, God is the fountain of all good: whatever comes from him will lead to him. His bleſſing is on his own productions, and his curſe on every thing beſides. *Son of man*, ſaith the Lord, *receive the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.* Deeply conſider, that to be ſucceſsful in bringing ſouls to God, you muſt bring the ſpirit of the goſpel into the work of the miniſtry.—In order to this; ſee that you retain a clear ſenſe of God's mercy to your own ſoul, and while you feel his love in your heart, it will not only ſupport you in all trials and difficulties, but will induce you cheerfully

fully to ſpend and be ſpent for the ſalvation of thoſe for whom Chriſt has died. You preach, not merely to explain God's word, but to ſave ſouls: whenever you forget this, you go aſtray.—Now, as no man can ſee the worth of the ſalvation which God has provided for him, till he be convinced of his want of it; therefore, preach the law and its terrors to make way for the goſpel of Chriſt crucified. But take heed, leſt while you announce the terrors, of the Lord, in order to awaken ſinners and prepare them for Chriſt, that you do not give way to your own ſpirit, eſpecially if you meet with oppoſition. Remember that admirable advice, given by the greateſt preacher God ever made, to a young man juſt ſetting out in the work: *The ſervant of God muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle towards all: apt to teach; patient: in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe who oppoſe themſelves.* 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. From an indeſcribable law in the œconomy of the intellectual world, the ſpirit that acts upon another, begets in it, its own likeneſs.—You will get a profuſion of light on this ſubject, if you take care to carry the Spirit and unction of Chriſt with you into all your public miniſtrations; and preſerve them in all your private communications with the people. I have known miniſters, and of no mean note either, who ſeldom have a ſoul comforted under their miniſtry, merely becauſe of their harſh, auſtere manner of preaching the goſpel. Others, far their inferiors in point of miniſterial qualifications, get ſouls for their hire whereever they come, principally (under God) through their affectionate manner of recommending the goſpel of the grace of Chriſt. Of the former it has been juſtly ſaid, *They make even the promiſes of God too hot to be held.*

Beware of diſcouraging the people, therefore, avoid continually finding fault with them. This does very

great hurt. There are ſome, whoſe ſermons impreſs nothing but terror: and though they point out the heights and depths of holineſs; yet they leave the hearers no courage to follow on to know the Lord. There are others, who become *Cenſors* general, of the different ſocieties to whom they preach. This (imperceptibly to themſelves) ſpoils their own tempers, begets a ſpirit of uncharitableneſs, and greatly injures their uſefulneſs. If you find a ſociety *fallen* or *falling*, examine as cloſely as you can to find out all the good that is among them; and copying Chriſt's conduct towards the ſeven Aſiatic churches, preface all that you have to ſay on the head of their backſliding, with the good that is in them; and make that *good* which they ſtill poſſeſs, the reaſon why they ſhould ſhake themſelves from the duſt, take courage, and earneſtly ſtrive for more. If you ground your exhortations to increaſing diligence and zeal, on what they have *loſt*, inſtead of, on what they yet *poſſeſs*, and may *ſpeedily gain*, you miſs your way, and loſe your labour. I tried the former way, and did no good: I abandoned it, and adopted the latter, and God bleſſed it. Mr. Weſley uſed to give the ſignificant appellation of *Croakers*, to thoſe who were always telling the people, "ye are fallen! ye are fallen!" and he obſerved that ſuch injured the work of God wherever they came. I have in general found, that thoſe who are moſt frequent in the above cry, are ſuch as have ſuffered loſs in their own ſouls; and taking a *proſpect* of what is *without*, from a *retroſpect* of what is *within*, they imagine that all they ſee are in the ſame apoſtate condition with themſelves.

Man is naturally prone to act in extremes: therefore take good heed that while you avoid the above evil, you fall not into that other of ſlightly paſſing by the tranſgreſſions of the wicked, or the backſlidings of the people

of

of God. Caſes may occur, that will require public and cutting reproof: but as I hinted before, in all ſuch caſes copy the example of our bleſſed Lord to the ſeven Aſiatic churches. There we have an infallible Directory. May God help us to follow it.

On this head I will venture to give you another piece of advice, which, if you regard your own peace and the good of the people, you will ſeriouſly attend to.

Avoid the error of thoſe who are continually finding fault with their congregations becauſe more do not attend: This is both imprudent and unjuſt — *Imprudent*, for as people do not like to be *forced* in what ſhould be a *free-will*-offering, ſo they are infallibly diſguſted with thoſe who attempt it: *unjuſt*, it being contrary both to reaſon and equity, to ſcold theſe who come, becauſe others do not attend. I have known this conduct ſcatter a congregation, but I never knew it gather one. Indeed, it ſavours too much of pride and ſelf-love. It ſeems to ſay, "Why do you not come to hear ME? Am I not a moſt excellent Preacher? What a reproach is it to your underſtanding that you keep away when *I* am here!" Bring Chriſt with you, and preach his truth in the love thereof, and you will never be without a congregation, if God have any work for you to do in that place.

II. *Concerning the Choice of Texts.*

Never take a text which you do not fully underſtand; and make it a point of conſcience to give the *literal* meaning of it to the people. This is a matter of great and ſolemn importance. To give God's words a different meaning to what he intended to convey by them, or, to put a conſtruction upon them which we have not the fulleſt proof he has intended, is awful indeed! Any perſon

who is but even a little acquainted with ſpiritual things, may give *a* ſpiritual interpretation (according to his own opinion) to any text: but it is not every perſon who can give the *literal* ſenſe. The ſpiritual meaning muſt ever be drawn from the literal: and indeed when the firſt is well known, the latter, which is its uſe and application, will naturally ſpring from it: but, without all controverſy, the literal meaning is that which God would have firſt underſtood. By not attending to this, hereſies, falſe doctrines, and errors of all kinds, have been propagated, and multiplied in the world.

Remember, you are called, not only to explain the *things* of God; but alſo the *words* of God. The meaning of the *thing* is found in the *word:* and if the *word* which compriſes the original *idea* be not properly underſtood, the meaning of the *thing* can never be defined; and on this ground the edification of the people is impoſſible. We often take it for granted, that the words which are in common uſe, are well known, eſpecially when we underſtand them ourſelves: but this is a very falſe opinion; and has bad conſequences; for elementary matters being not well known, it is no wonder if the intellectual improvement of the people do not keep pace with our labours. No man can read a language, the alphabet of which he has never learned. Every mathematician feels it a matter of imperious neceſſity to define all the terms he uſes in his demonſtrations.

Never appear to contradict the Holy Spirit by what is called treating a ſubject *negatively* and *poſitively*. I ſhall wave all ſtrictures on the barbariſm of "ſhewing *negatively* what a thing *is not*." And will only beg leave to ſtate, that the following inſtances of this injudicious and dangerous mode of handling the word of God have fallen within the compaſs of my own obſervation.

A Gentleman

A Gentleman took for his text, Iſa. xxviii. 16. *He that believeth ſhall not make haſte.* On this he preached *two* ſermons. His diviſion was as follows; "I ſhall firſt prove that he who believeth *ſhall make haſte:* and ſecondly, ſhew in what ſenſe he that believeth *ſhall not make haſte.*" On the firſt, which was a flat contradiction of the text, he ſpent more than an hour: and the congregation were obliged to *wait* a whole month before he could come back to inform them that he who believeth *ſhall not make haſte.* I would not be thought to inſinuate, that the firſt ſermon was not ſound doctrine and good ſenſe, as to its matter; but I ſay it was injudicious.—And beſides, it was abſurd to found his work upon a text, the very letter of which it contradicted in the moſt palpable manner.

Another, a citizen of no mean city, not a thouſand miles from the place where I write, took his text from Pſa. xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but God delivereth him out of them all.* His diviſion was as follows; "In handling this text I will firſt prove, that there is *none righteous.* Secondly, That the afflictions of the *righteous* are many: and Thirdly, That the Lord delivereth him out of them all." The honeſt man's meaning and deſign were undoubtedly good, but who could hear his diviſion without trembling for himſelf and his text!

Another took Luke xii. 32. *Fear not little flock,* for it is your *Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.* In oppoſition to the *letter* of his text, the Preacher laboured to prove, that the flock of Chriſt is not a *little,* but a *very large* flock: and in order to do this, brought in multitudes of pious heathens, vaſt numbers who ſought and found mercy in their laſt hour, together with myriads of infants, ideots, &c.

Who

Who does not ſee, that in each of the above caſes, ignorance of, or inattention to the *literal* meaning of the text, was the grand cauſe of this abſurdity and contradiction? Chuſe, therefore, ſuch texts as you underſtand, and after having conſcientiouſly given the literal interpretation, improve the whole in the beſt manner you can to the edification of your hearers.

Seldom take a *very ſhort* text; becauſe a ſhort one may not afford you ſufficient matter to entertain and inſtruct your congregation. There are not many to be found who have the ability to uſe a *few words* of ſcripture as Addiſon and Steele did the Greek and Latin mottos of their Spectators: and thoſe who have the ability, ſhould not uſe it in this way, for this plain reaſon, that in preaching, *God* ſhould be heard *more* than *man*. But where imagination and invention are put to the rack to ſupply the place of the words of God, the hearers may admire the addreſs of the Preacher, but are not likely to be fed with the bread of life.—In ſuch caſes *man* ſpeaks *moſt*, GOD *leaſt*. Such preaching muſt leave the people ignorant of the *ſcriptures*. With many at preſent preaching is become more of a *human art*, than of a *divine ſcience:* and when this is conſidered, we need not wonder that the pulpit is ſo often employed, without becoming the mean of ſalvation to them that hear.

Never take a text which out of its proper connection can mean nothing. — I travelled once with two Preachers who trifled the whole year in this way. Their texts were continually ſuch as theſe. *Adam, where art thou?—I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee.—If thou wilt deal juſtly and truly with my Maſter tell me.—I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on?—Thy mouth is moſt ſweet, &c.* I need not add that theſe ſolemn triflers did the people no good: and it will not ſurpriſe you to

hear

hear, that they are both, long ſince, fallen away. Such texts as the foregoing may be preached from without any ſtudy; for two reaſons: firſt, Becauſe they are not ſubjects for ſtudy, and ſhould not be ſtudied. And ſecondly, Becauſe the perſon who takes ſuch, ſpeaks on them whatever comes uppermoſt, as one explanation will ſuit them juſt as well as another: for, taken out of their proper connection they mean—nothing. Beware of this, and never do violence to the word of God, by taking a text out of the connection in which his Spirit has placed it. Let God ſpeak for himſelf, and his words will bear convincing teſtimony to their own excellence.

I had intended to ſay ſomething concerning the *abuſe of ſcripture* by what is called *allegorical preaching*:—but finding that Mr. Bradburn has in contemplation the publication of a piece expreſsly on this ſubject, I deſiſt; well knowing that his piece will convey the ampleſt information: and be illuſtrated with ſuch a variety of ſtriking examples as I am unable to produce.—And I ſincerely wiſh that Mr. Bradburn may give this tract with as much ſpeed as poſſible, to his brethren and to the public.

III. *Concerning your Behaviour in the Pulpit.*

Go from your knees to the chapel. Get a renewal of your commiſſion every time you go to preach, in a renewed ſenſe of the favour of God. Carry your authority to declare the goſpel of Chriſt not in your hand, but in your heart. When in the pulpit, be always ſolemn: ſay nothing to make your congregation laugh. Remember you are ſpeaking for eternity; and trifling is inconſiſtent with ſuch awful ſubjects as the great God, the agony and death of Chriſt, the torments of hell, and the happineſs of heaven. Never

Never aſſume an air of importance, while in the pulpit : you ſtand in an awful place, and God hates the proud man.

Avoid all quaint and fantaſtic attitudes. I once knew a pious and ſenſible young man who, through a bad habit which he had unfortunately acquired, made ſo many *antics*, as the people termed them, in the pulpit, as to prejudice and grieve many. A very ſerious and ſenſible perſon who conſtantly heard him, really thought he was afflicted with that ſpecies of *paralyſis* termed *St. Vitus's Dance :* and hearing ſome blaming him, ſeriouſly entered on his defence, on the ground of its being *the viſitation* of God. As there are a thouſand reaſons why a young man ſhould not wiſh the people to form ſuch an opinion of him, ſo there is all the reaſon in the world why he ſhould avoid *queer noddings*, *ridiculous ſtoopings* and *erections* of his body, ſkipping from ſide to ſide of the deſk, knitting his brows ; with every other theatrical or foppiſh air, which tends to diſgrace the pulpit, and render himſelf contemptible.

Never ſhake or flouriſh your handkerchief ; this is abominable. Do not gaze about on your congregation, before you begin your work : if you take a view of them at all, let it be as tranſient as poſſible.

Endeavour to gain the attention of your congregation. Remind them of the preſence of God. Get their ſpirits deeply impreſſed with this truth, *Thou, God, ſeeſt me!* and aſſure them, " He is in the midſt, not to judge, but to bleſs them ; that they ſhould wait as for eternity, for now is the day of ſalvation." I have ever found that a few words of this kind ſpoken before the ſermon, have done very great good.

The pulpit appears to me analogous to the *box* in which the witneſſes are ſworn in a court of juſtice, " To

ſay

ſay the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."—You are a *witneſs* for God, and are bound by more, if poſſible, than an oath, to ſpeak the truth in righteouſneſs, and to declare faithfully and ſolemnly, according to the beſt of your knowledge, the whole counſel of God.

Give out the *page*, and meaſure of the hymn, and the hymn itſelf diſtinctly, and with a full voice, and do not hold the book before your face while giving out the hymn, for this hinders the progreſs of the ſound.

While praying, keep your eyes cloſed: at ſuch a time you have nothing to do with outward objects: the moſt important matters are at iſſue between God and you; and he is to be contemplated with the eye of the mind. I cannot conceive how it is poſſible to have the ſpirit of devotion in prayer, while the perſon is engaged in gazing about, on his congregation. Such an one may *ſay* his prayers, but he certainly cannot *pray* them. If you wiſh the people to join with you in this part of the worſhip, ſpeak ſo as to be heard, even at the beginning: *whiſpering* petitions to God, may be *genteel* for ought I know, but I am certain it is not to the uſe of edification. In your prayers avoid long prefaces and circumlocutions:—You find none of theſe in the Bible. Some have got a method of complimenting the Moſt High on the dignity of his nature, and the glory of his heavens; this you ſhould ſtudiouſly avoid. He that cometh to God, muſt know that HE IS: and a proper conſideration of his Being, Power, Holineſs, and Mercy, cannot fail deeply to impreſs your mind, and lead you at once even to his ſeat. You ſhould never come into the congregation but in the ſpirit of prayer. Let your mind be wound up into that ſpirit in your cloſet; and then in your prayers in the congregation, you will appear what

you ſhould be, *a man familiar with God.* Examine the ſcriptures, and you will find that all the holy men of God prayed in this way: they came directly to the Throne and preferred their ſuit: ever conſidering themſelves in the preſence of God, the very commencement of their ſupplications ſeems no other than an *external* continuance of prayers in which their *hearts* had been long previouſly engaged.

Say the Lord's prayer in the ſame tone and elevation of voice in which you ſaid your own. I have obſerved many, when they came to this ſolemn form, ſuddenly dropping their voice, and repeating it as if it made no part of their devotion. Is this treating the inſtitution of Chriſt with becoming reverence?

Read your text diſtinctly, and begin to ſpeak about the middle of your voice, not only that you may be readily heard, but that you may riſe and fall as occaſion may require, which you cannot do if you begin either too high or too low. Every ſentence you ſpeak ſhould tend to edification, and it cannot edify, unleſs it can be heard: therefore never begin too *low*; this is a greater evil than even *ſcreaming* itſelf.

Be ſure to have the matter of your text well arranged in your own mind before you come into the pulpit, that you may not be confuſed while ſpeaking: but beware of too much *dividing*, and *ſubdividing*: by theſe means the word of God has been made to ſpeak ſomething, any thing, or nothing, according to the creed or prejudices of the Preacher. How little of this *diviſion* work do you meet with in the diſcourſes of the Prophets, the ſermons of Chriſt, or the preachings of the Apoſtles! Beſides, this mode of preaching is hackneyed to death; and can never ſucceed but in judicious hands. Unleſs the matter of the text be abundant, it rather fetters than

enlarges

enlarges the mind: and that which is ominouſly called the *ſkeleton*, i. e. a ſyſtem of *mere bones*, is in general but ill clothed with muſcles, worſe ſtrung with nerves, and often without the breath either of a ſpiritual or intellectual life. On this ſubject, a man of deep ſenſe and piety once obſerved; "The major part of what we hear at preſent in ſermons, is, *Three heads and a concluſion.*"

In whatever way you handle your text, take care when you have exhauſted the matter of it, not to go over it again. Apply every thing of importance as you go along, and when you have *done*, learn to make an *end*. It is not eſſential to a ſermon, that it be half an hour or an hour long. Some preach more in ten minutes than others do in ſixty. At any rate, the length of time ſpent in preaching, can never compenſate for the want of matter; and the evil is doubled when a man brings forth *little*, and is *long* about it. There are ſome who ſing long hymns, and pray long prayers, merely *to fill up the time*: this is a ſhocking profanation of theſe ſacred ordinances, and has the moſt direct tendency to bring them into contempt. If they are of no more importance to the Preacher or his work, than merely *to fill up the time*, the people act wiſely, who ſtay at home and mind their buſineſs till the time in which the ſermon commences. Have you never heard the following obſervation? "You need not be in ſuch haſte to go to the chapel: you will be time enough to hear the ſermon, for Mr. X. Y. always ſings a *long* hymn, and makes a *long* prayer.

As to the *matter* of your preaching, I will only ſay; preach Jeſus: preach his atonement: preach his dying love: and through him proclaim a *free*, *full*, and *preſent* ſalvation, and God will bleſs your labours wherever you go.

Never preach long ſermons—theſe are intolerable, unleſs there be a great variety of intereſting matter in

them, accompanied with great animation. I have often preached only *ten* or *fifteen* minutes at a time: Why? becauſe I had no more to ſay on that ſubject, and I did not think that what I had already uttered was of conſequence enough to entitle it to a *ſecond* hearing.

You may eaſily find many treatiſes written on the Gift of Preaching, the Eloquence of the Pulpit, the Compoſition of a Sermon, &c. &c. both in our own language, and in foreign tongues; and he who has a good judgment may profit by them: but I muſt confeſs, all I have ever read on the ſubject has never conveyed ſo much information to my mind on the original, and in my opinion only proper mode of preaching, as Neh. c. viii. v. 8. "*So they read in the book, in the law of God, diſtinctly: and gave the ſenſe, and cauſed them to underſtand the reading.*" A few moments ſpent in conſidering this ſubject, will not be loſt.

The Iſraelites having been lately brought out of the Babyloniſh captivity, in which they had continued 70 years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, c. xxv. 11. were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears they had in general, loſt the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to ſuch a degree, that when the book of the law was read, they did not underſtand it: but certain Levites ſtood *by and gave the ſenſe:* i. e. tranſlated it into the Chaldee dialect.—This was not only the origin of the Chaldee *Targums*, or tranſlation of the law and prophets into that tongue; but was alſo, in all probability, the origin of *preaching from a text:* for it appears, that the people were not only ignorant of their ancient language, but alſo of the *rites* and *ceremonies* of their religion, having been ſo long in Babylon, where they were not permitted to obſerve them. This being the caſe, not only the *language* muſt be *interpreted*, but the *meaning*

of

of the *rites* and *ceremonies* muſt alſo be *explained*; for we find from Neh. c. viii. 13, &c. that they had even forgotten the *feaſt of Tabernacles*, and every thing relative to that ceremony.

As we no where find that what is called *preaching on*, or *expounding* a text, was ever in uſe before that period; we may thank the Babyloniſh captivity for producing, in the hand of divine Providence, a cuſtom the moſt excellent and beneficial ever introduced among men.

What the nature of preaching was at this early period of its inſtitution, we learn from the above cited text.

Firſt, *They read in the book of the law of God.* The *words of God*, are the proper matter of preaching, for they contain the wiſdom of the Moſt High, and reveal to man the things which make for his peace.

Secondly, They read *diſtinctly*: מפרש *m'phoraſh*, from פרש *paraſh*, to expand; they analyſed, dilated, and expounded it at large.

Thirdly, *They gave the ſenſe*: ושום שכל *v' ſom ſeket*, *put weight to it*: i. e. ſhewed its importance and utility; thus applying verbal criticiſm, and general expoſition to the moſt important purpoſe.

Fourthly, They cauſed them to underſtand the reading: ויבינו במקרא *vaiyabinu bammikra*, and *they underſtood*, had a mental taſte and perception of the things which were *in the reading*; i. e. in the letter and ſpirit of the text.

This mode of expounding is ſtill more neceſſary to us. *Firſt*, Becauſe the Sacred Writings, as they came from God, are ſhut up in languages no longer vernacular. *Secondly*, Ninety-nine out of a hundred know nothing of theſe languages. *Thirdly*, Provincial cuſtoms and faſhions are mentioned in theſe writings, which muſt be underſtood, or the force and meaning of many texts

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cannot

cannot be comprehended. *Fourthly*, Sacred things are illuſtrated by arts and ſciences, of which the maſs of the people are as ignorant as they are of the original tongues. *Fifthly*, There is a depth in the word of God, which cannot be fathomed except, either by divine inſpiration, which no idler has reaſon to expect; or by deep ſtudy and reſearch, for which the majority of the people have no time. *Sixthly*, The people truſt in general to the piety, learning, and abilities of their miniſters; and maintain them as perſons capable of inſtructing them in all the deep things of God: and, believing them to be holy men, they are confident, they will not take their food and raiment for doing a work for which they have not the ordinary qualifications.

You may well exclaim, "Who is ſufficient for theſe things!" and I may with equal propriety anſwer, He who is taught by the Spirit of God, and neglects not to cultivate his mind in the knowledge of his divine teſtimonies.

While you are engaged in the pulpit in recommending the ſalvation of God, endeavour to *feel* the truth you preach, and diffuſe a divine animation through every part. *As* the preacher appears to preach, the people hear and believe. You may ſet it down as an incontrovertible truth, that none of your hearers will be more affected with your diſcourſe than yourſelf. A dull, dead preacher makes a dull, dead congregation.

Shun all controverſies about politics: and eſpecially that diſgrace of the pulpit, political preaching. I have known this do much evil; but though I have often heard it, I never knew an inſtance of its doing good. It is not the *bread* which God has provided for his children: and from the pulpit, it is neither profitable for doctrine, for reproof, nor for inſtruction in righteouſneſs. If others

will

will bring this *chaff* into the houſe of God, copy them not: you are called to *feed* the flock of Chriſt; and this you cannot do but by the *ſincere milk* of the word, and the *bread of life*. For what is the *chaff* to the *wheat?* ſaith the Lord.

A ſentence or two of affectionate prayer in different parts of the diſcourſe has a wonderful tendency to enliven it, and to make the people hear with concern and intereſt. On this ſubject, a great, foreign orator gives the miniſters of the goſpel the following advice. "When you have proved the truth of the principles you laid down, you have done but little of the great miniſterial work. It is from this point, the proof of your doctrine, that you are to ſet out to triumph over the paſſions of your auditory; to ſtrip the ſinner of every ſubterfuge and excuſe, that *conviction* may lead him to *repentance*. To produce this effect, leave your proofs and diviſions behind you: addreſs yourſelf to the conſcience in powerful interrogatives: repeat nothing that you have before ſaid; you have now to produce a new effect, and muſt uſe a new language. Employ the utmoſt energy of your ſoul to ſhew them that happineſs is to be found no where but in God.—What ſhould I ſay more? Forget method, forget art itſelf.—Lift up your ſoul in affectionate prayer to God;—become the interceſſor of your auditory, that the multitude which withſtood your menaces, may be conſtrained to yield to the effuſions of your love." So preach and pray, that your congregation may be made better, or purpoſe to become better in conſequence of your labour.

Seldom quote *poetry* in your ſermons: If you avail yourſelf of the ſentiment of the poet, give it in plain proſe. To ſay the leaſt of it, it certainly is not agreeable to the rules of congruity to interlard *proſe* diſcourſes with ſcraps of *verſe*. It is nothing but cuſtom that renders this impropriety

impropriety at all ſupportable. Reverſe the buſineſs, and ſee how oddly a poem will appear which has here and there ſcraps of proſe in it. I ſuppoſe the Europeans borrowed this method from the Aſiatics: But it is more tolerable in their languages than in ours. All the eaſtern tongues are highly figurative, and ſuch a language put into numbers will eaſily form poetry. The tranſition, therefore, from their poetic proſe to verſe, is by no means ſo great and uncouth as in ours. It muſt be granted that many public ſpeakers uſe it ſometimes; but, the very beſt ſpeakers uſe it very ſeldom. I wiſh it to be generally avoided; not only becauſe I believe it does no good, but alſo, becauſe there are few who know how to quote it; and the poet is often murdered by his injudicious rehearſer. How can a man, who has ſcarcely a dignified ſentiment in his proſe, quote, with any propriety, a ſublime thought in verſe?

While I have you in the pulpit, I will give you a concluding advice relative to this part of the buſineſs. Never *ape* any perſon, however eminent he may be for piety, or miniſterial abilities. Every man has a fort of his own, and if he keep within it, he is impregnable. The providence of God has cauſed many of the natural manners of men to differ as much as their perſons: and it is nearly as impoſſible for a man to imitate the peculiar manners of another, as it is to aſſume his features. It is on this account that no one has ever ſucceeded who has endeavoured to copy another: and as the aiming to do it is eaſily diſcoverable, the man who does it is deſpicable in the eyes of the people. And that man is juſtly deſpiſed by others, who has ſo far deſpiſed himſelf and his Maker, as to endeavour to throw off his natural *ſelf*, in order to act in another man's character. In former ages, ſuch a perſon was termed HYPOCRITE; i. e. one who endea-

vours

vours to perſonate another. I need not tell you how much and how deſervedly this character is execrated in ſacred things. By ſuch conduct all is riſqued, and all is loſt: that which you had of your own is ruined in attempting to get that which belongs to your neighbour; and *his* excellencies not ſuiting *you*, you fail in the attempt to perſonate *him*, and are thereby rendered ridiculous.—The fable of the *dog* and *ſhadow*, will fully illuſtrate the reſidue of my meaning on this part of the ſubject.

IV. *Concerning your Behaviour in your Circuit.*

Never diſappoint a place: This would be contrary to your covenant with God, your agreement with your brethren, and your engagements to the people. Keep your own watch always to true time, and begin preciſely at the time appointed. Never be a minute later than true time, except in the country, where there is no public clock: Then *five* minutes may be allowed for the difference between clocks and watches. Do not many preachers, of all denominations, ſin againſt God and their own ſouls, by not attending to this?

Suppoſe preaching be publiſhed for *ſeven* o'clock, and you go not in for five, ten, or fifteen minutes after; what can your congregation think of you? You publiſh preaching for ſuch a time, and you do not come in till conſiderably *after*; and this is your *uſual* cuſtom.—Then, (harſh as the ſaying may appear) you are certainly a habitual and public liar; and though ſuch conduct may paſs without much reprehenſion from the good-natured people; can you imagine that there is no enormity in it in the ſight of the *God* of *Truth*? Surely you cannot. I never knew a preacher who acted in this way but loſt the confidence of the people to ſuch a degree, as eſſentially

to injure his public uſefulneſs. Add to this, that the congregations are ever ruined by ſuch conduct.

Be punctual in getting in proper time to the place where you are to dine and lodge. Do not make a whole family wait upon *you*. This is both injuſtice and inſolence. While I readily grant, with our bleſſed Lord, that *the labourer is worthy of his meat*; yet he ſhould certainly come to receive it in due time: and he who *habitually* neglects this, nonpluſing and confuſing the families wherever he comes, is not worthy of a morſel of bread.

I have known ſome, of more than common miniſterial abilities, loſe their importance, and ruin themſelves in the opinion of the people, by their want of punctuality in this reſpect.

Never leave any place you viſit, without praying with the family: and ſeize the moſt convenient time for family-prayer in the houſes where you lodge. Juſt before they ſit down to meat, is, in my opinion, the beſt time: *Then* the ſeveral members of the family are generally preſent. But I have often obſerved, that one, and another, after having *hurried* down their victuals, have either gone, or been called away to buſineſs; ſo that before the whole family had finiſhed their meal, one third of the members of it were not to be found. There are, it is true, ſome families ſo well regulated, that this *ſeceſſion* is never permitted; yet, even among theſe, I have always found it the beſt way to have prayer before meals, and eſpecially at the breakfaſt hour. Should you be invited to any place where you are not permitted to pray with the family, never go thither again: and give them your reaſon. An ambaſſador of God ſhould be tranſacting the buſineſs of his maſter whitherſoever he goes, and where he is not permitted to do it, there God has not ſent him. Be ſteady, keep a good conſcience, and a good conſcience will keep you.

If

If you wiſh to keep a good conſcience, you muſt walk as in the preſence of God. Extremes beget extremes. Take heed then, that while you avoid *levity* on the one hand, you fall not into *ſour godlineſs* on the other. There are ſome who have the unhappy art of making a *jeſt* out of every thing; and even apply ſcripture in this way. Such conduct is execrable. There are others, who, being of an *unhappy* caſt of mind, through a kind of natural or factitious melancholy, ſtrip a man of ſalvation for a ſmile, and condemn him to the pit for being cheerful. Avoid both theſe extremes; and remember that *levity* will ape *religious cheerfulneſs*; and *ſourneſs of temper* will endeavour to paſs itſelf off for *chriſtian gravity*. But do not judge from ſuch appearances. There are ſome who are naturally of a *quiet*, *grave* turn of mind; which, in general, gives them credit for much more goodneſs than they poſſeſs. There are others who are naturally of a *merry*, *volatile* ſpirit. Theſe often get credit for *leſs* religion than they enjoy. Mr. Whitfield once judiciouſly obſerved on this ſubject, That an *ounce* of grace went farther in ſome than a *pound* in others. For light on this and many other matters of importance, remember, that every human ſpirit has its own *peculiar*, *natural* CHARACTERISTIC, which was given it by its Creator, and which he never changes, nor deſigns ſhould be changed. The buſineſs of divine grace in converting the ſoul, is not to deſtroy its natural characteriſtics; but to purify, refine, and adapt their vaſt *varieties* to the *innumerable* purpoſes of his wiſdom and goodneſs in their creation.

Tell your ſecret trials and temptations to very few.—Your weakneſs, &c. ſhould be known only to God and yourſelf. No one ſhould be truſted, except that friend whom you know well, and to whom you can at all times truſt even your life. I have known ſome who were

telling their trials, weakneſſes, &c. every where; the conſequence was, they were deſpiſed, or pitied without being eſteemed.

Wherever you go, diſcountenance that diſgraceful cuſtom (properly enough termed) Bibliomancy; i. e. divination by the Bible. I need ſcarcely obſerve, that this conſiſts in what is called dipping into the Bible, taking paſſages of ſcripture at hazard, and drawing indications thence concerning the preſent and future ſtate of the ſoul. This is a ſcandal to chriſtianity. So alſo are thoſe religious trifles, impiouſly and ominouſly called *Scripture Cards*. Thank God! theſe have never been very common among us; and are certainly not of Methodiſt growth. In an evil hour they were firſt introduced; and have ſince been criminally tolerated. I have found them the conſtant companions of religious *goſſips*; and have ſeen them *drawn* for the purpoſe of ſhewing the ſucceſs of journies, enterprizes, &c. Very great miſchief they have done to my own knowledge; and ſenſible perſons have through them been led to deſpiſe the whole of that ſyſtem from which they never ſprung, on which they have never been engrafted, and in which they have never been more than barely tolerated. Giving the authors of them all the credit we can for the goodneſs of their intention, we cannot help ſaying of their productions, (and this is giving them the very beſt character they deſerve) that they are the drivellings of religious *nonage*, or of piety in *ſuperannuation*. I do not find, that Mr. Weſley ever made, uſed, or approved of theſe things: but as they were tolerated in his time, they have been attributed to himſelf: hence the following calumny in a very late publication, the Encyclopœdia Perthenſis. "We have heard it affirmed (ſay the editors), that thoſe well-meaning

ing people called Methodiſts, have long practiſed Bibliomancy, with regard to the future ſtate of their ſouls; but that ſome of their members having been driven to deſpair by texts occurring to them, that threatened the moſt awful judgments, their late paſtor, Mr. Weſley, to prevent ſuch fatal conſequences from recurring, improved upon this ſyſtem of *ſacred lottery*, by printing ſeveral packs of cards with a variety of texts, containing nothing but the moſt comfortable promiſes: and thus his diſciples drew with courage and comfort, in a lottery where there were various *prizes*, great and ſmall, but no *blanks*." I am ſorry that there ſhould have ever been the leaſt ſhadow of ground for the above calumny: but let theſe gentlemen know, and let all men by theſe preſents know, that the great body of Methodiſts never uſed them; that the preachers in general highly diſapprove of them; and that what is ſaid about Mr. Weſley's fabricating them, &c. is, to uſe a lilliputian expreſſion, *the thing that is not.* I am glad to find that they are daily *dying* among the few that did uſe them: I hope ſoon to hear that they are all finally *buried*, and earneſtly pray that they may never have a RESURRECTION, except to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.

Never go in debt for food, cloaths, or any thing elſe: it is no ſin to die in a ditch through hunger or cold: but it is a crime to go in debt when there is not the fulleſt proſpect of being able to pay. It is the moſt certain and honourable way, never to ſit down to the food, nor put on the cloaths, till the bills for both are diſcharged. By theſe means you will keep clear of the world, and make moſt of the little you have. Every word of the old adage is true; "Live not on *truſt*, for that is the way to pay double."

Never

Never go out on parties of pleaſure, however innocent they may be: what, in this caſe, would be conſidered as no evil in another, might be reputed a crime in you.

Never chuſe a circuit for yourſelf. If you do, and ſucceed in getting the object of your choice; make up your mind to bear all the croſſes *alone*, which you may meet with in it: for how can you look to God for ſtrength to ſupport you under trials, which you may reaſonably conclude are of your own procuring? You are God's meſſenger; pray him therefore to ſend you where you may *do* and *get* moſt good. In ſuch a place the croſſes you meet with are God's croſſes, and he is bound not only to ſupport you under them, but to ſanctify them to the good of your ſoul.

Get a genuine friend whenever you can, and prize him much when you have got him. Beware of forming *haſty* friendſhips: they are ſeldom ſolid. Confide little in the perſon who *ſuddenly* profeſſes uncommon affection for you. He may be *ſincere*, but, depend upon it, he will not be *ſteady*. Remember the proverb, *Hot* love is ſoon *cold*. Thoſe who form haſty friendſhips are always fickle. This is bad, but it is not the worſt in this buſineſs; for theſe very perſons through the changeableneſs of their hearts ſoon withdrawing their affections from you, will accuſe you of ingratitude and unkindneſs, while the whole is owing to the uncertainty of their own character and the ficklenеſs of their hearts. Shun ſuch, as you would an enemy: for they are not leſs injurious. On this ſubject I will give you two Aſiatic proverbs: 1. Never truſt to appearances; behold the *drum* with all its noiſe is *empty* within. 2. If you have a friend who takes offence at trifles, break entirely with him, for he is not to be truſted.

V. *Concerning*

V. *Concerning your Behaviour in the Houſe where you lodge.*

On your arrival, get as ſpeedily as poſſible to private prayer, and earneſtly beg God to bleſs your coming;—to bleſs you to the family, and to the congregation, ſo that you may leave that place with an increaſe of ſpiritual life, and with the comfortable ſatisfaction of having been a meſſenger of peace to that houſe, and to the people of that place.

Shew yourſelf ſatisfied with every thing you receive. Be not nice in your food. Do not keep a lordly diſtance from the family:—Be ſo familiar with them as to gain their confidence; that you may the better ſucceed in talking with them concerning their ſouls. At the ſame time keep a due diſtance, that while you are eſteemed as a *brother* in Chriſt, you may be acknowledged as his *miniſter*. There is much truth in that proverb, "Too much familiarity breeds contempt."

Speak cloſely and lovingly to every perſon in the family: but let it be as much apart as poſſible; for members of the ſame houſehold ſeldom ſpeak freely before each other.

He who deſpiſes *little things*, ſhall fall by *little* and *little*. Do not therefore diſregard the following *ſmall* advices.

Give the family where you lodge as little trouble as poſſible: never deſire any of them, not even the ſervants, to do any thing for you that you can conveniently do for yourſelf. It is an odious thing to ſee a perſon whoſe character ſhould be *the ſervant of all*, preſſing every body into his ſervice; giving unneceſſary trouble wherever he comes, turning a houſe upſide down, and being diſſatisfied with every thing that is done for him. I have always

ſeen,

ſeen, that thoſe who require moſt attendance are the moſt difficult to be pleaſed: for they are generally of a proud or diſcontented ſpirit; and ſuch a ſpirit is never ſatisfied. A man of a truly chriſtian and noble mind, finds it his higheſt intereſt to have few wants; and eſteems it a luxury to miniſter to his own neceſſities.

Never pull off your boots in a parlour or ſitting-room. Leave your hat, whip, great-coat, &c. in the hall, lobby, or ſome ſuch place. Do not leave your foul linen, dirty cloaths, ſhoes, &c. about in the room where you lodge. After having left your bed uncovered for ſome time, to cool and air, lay on the cloaths neatly when you quit your room; and always throw up your windows when you go out. Empty the baſon in which you have waſhed your hands, &c. and leave it always *clean*. Don't ſplaſh the walls, nor the floor. Wipe every drop of water off the waſh-ſtand, and ſpread your towel always to dry; and when dry, fold it looſely up, and place it on the head of the water-bottle. Never comb out your hair in a ſitting-room, or before company:—this is an unpardonable vulgarity: nor bruſh your cloaths in a bed-room;—this ſpoils the furniture. See that you ſpill no ink on the floors, tables, &c. Leave every thing in the place where you found it; and habituate yourſelf to put every chair you ſit on in is proper place when you riſe. Our deceaſed Father uſed often to ſay, "He who lives not by rule, lives not at all." I would juſt obſerve, that a rule for every part of a man's conduct is not eaſily obtained: and when got, is not eaſily applied. Precepts on theſe points may do much good to thoſe who ſtrive to learn even more than they are taught: but example teaches more forcibly and more effectually. Fourteen years ago I was appointed to travel in the Plymouth circuit with Mr. J. Maſon. I never met with a more upright, orderly, regular, decent

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man. From his conduct I learned more on the above ſubjects, than from all the precepts I ever received, or from all the books I ever read. When you meet with ſuch a perſon, thank God for the privilege, and endeavour to profit by it.

Obſerve rule and order in every thing; and it will not only be much to your own comfort, but will acquire you credit wherever you come. Remember, that cannot be conſidered as a ſmall thing to you, which either prejudices a family againſt you, or is inſtrumental in acquiring you their good graces.

Shun tea-drinking viſits: theſe, in general, murder time, and can anſwer no good purpoſe either to your body or ſoul. If you go out in this way at any time, let it be only where you have every reaſon to believe your viſit is likely to be uſeful to the ſouls of the people. But this can never be where there is a *party*.

Seventeen years ago I met with Mr. Weſley's *Letter on Tea*. I read it, and reſolved from that hour to drink no more of the juice of that herb till I could anſwer his arguments and objections.—I never ſaw that tract ſince, and from that day until now, I have not drank a cup of tea or coffee. For theſe things I moſtly found a ſubſtitute in the morning; and when I could not, I cheerfully went without breakfaſt: and in their place I never took any thing in the *evening*. By this line of conduct, I have not only joined hands with God to preſerve a feeble conſtitution; but I can *demonſtrate*, that I have actually ſaved TWO *whole* YEARS of time, which otherwiſe muſt have been irrecoverably loſt; and—perhaps my ſoul with it: for I have often had occaſion to obſerve, that tea-drinking viſits open the flood-gates of various temptations.

How can thoſe exclaim againſt needleſs ſelf-indulgence and waſte of time, who go out on tea-drinking vi-

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ſits in the *evenings!* It is a myſtery to me which I never wiſh to be able to unravel, how men can act in this way and *preach afterwards!* I have often wondered that this matter is never ſpoken of to the young preachers when they are admitted. But who can, with propriety, warn them againſt this evil? Only thoſe who are guiltleſs:—and where are they?—Alas! alas! do we not make a great outcry againſt evils, however diſcreditable to us as Chriſtians and miniſters, which are in themſelves, and in their neceſſary conſequences, of little moment, in compariſon of this epidemic and dangerous diſorder? But if our own conduct in this reſpect reproach us, ſhould we, while honeſt men, with-hold the word of caution and advice from our brother?

Go out as little as poſſible to eat and drink. Why is the poſitive command of Chriſt, on this head, ſo generally diſregarded? *Go not about from houſe to houſe.* The acting contrary to this precept has often brought great diſgrace on the goſpel of God. Stay in your own lodgings as much as poſſible, that you may have time for prayer and ſtudy. I have heard pious people (who received the preachers of the goſpel into their houſes) remark, "that they always found that preacher to be moſt uſeful, who kept moſt in his cloſet." Seldom frequent the tables of the rich or great: If you do, it will unavoidably prove a ſnare to you: the unction of God will periſh from your mind; and your preaching be only a dry, barren repetition of *old things*.—The bread of God in your hands will be like the dry, mouldy, gibeonitiſh cruſts, mentioned Joſhua ix. 5. Viſit the people, and ſpeak to them about their ſouls, as often and as much as you can; but be not at the mercy of every invitation to go out for a morſel of bread. If you take not this advice, you will do no good, get no good, and utterly evaporate your influence and conſequence.

conſequence. The people ſhould ſee to it, that ſuch a proviſion be made for their preachers at home, as to lay them under no neceſſity of going out for a morſel of food: but this is not always the caſe. When you do go out, let your viſits be ſhort. The only time that a man of *ſtudy* and *buſineſs* can ſpare is the *evening*, after all his work is done:—But take care, if you ſup out, never do it to the prejudice either of early riſing, or morning preaching.

VI. *Concerning the Cultivation of your Mind.*

Pray much, read much, write much. Have always ſome eſſay, diſſertation, &c. upon the anvil; and be ſure you finiſh whatever you undertake. Beginning a number of things, and finiſhing none of them, begets in the mind a habit of indeciſion and careleſſneſs.

Read the book of God. Read it regularly through, at leaſt once in the year; and take down in order, every text you think you have light ſufficient to preach from. By theſe means you will ever be acquiring *new* ſubjects, and be preſerved from the curſe of harping on the ſame ſtring in all the circuits you preach in.

Always carry a New Teſtament about you; and let God's word be your conſtant companion.—Read the ſcriptures as the word of God: read them with deep attention, and read them with reverence. Read a chapter or two every day upon your knees; and earneſtly beg the Father of lights to give you the ſpirit of wiſdom in the revelation of himſelf, that you may *know*, *feel*, and *preach* the *whole truth* as it is in Jeſus.

In this work, every morning ſhould be employed; and then take care to mark down the texts which you may have occaſion to preach on in the courſe of the day. Never leave this ſubject to any other part of the day: you

may be called upon unexpectedly to preach, when there is not time for you to go and search for a text: In such a case, if you are not prepared, *confusion* is the least evil you can expect to meet with. Therefore, see that the morning always provide for all the possible calls of the day on this head. It is a sore evil to see the preacher, who should himself accompany the people in every act of worship, employing the time they are singing the high praises of God, in fumbling through his Bible to get some text to preach from.

But while you read the Bible as the revelation of God, and the fountain of divine knowledge, don't let your reading *end* there. I said before, read much; but take care that all your reading be directed to the increase of your knowledge and experience in the things of God. With an eye constantly directed to this end, acquaint yourself as much as possible with every branch of science. No man can fully explain the Bible, who has not a general acquaintance with the most important sciences and arts. The Bible, considered even as a human composition, is a book of the greatest learning under heaven: and there is scarcely an art or science which is not alluded to in it, and images frequently borrowed from them to illustrate those sacred truths which the Spirit of God declares. It would be the easiest thing among ten thousand, to prove that there are multitudes of texts in that blessed book, which no man can explain, who has not a tolerable knowledge of History, Chronology, Geography, Astronomy, Anatomy, and Chemistry. If this be the case, (and it would be easy to demonstrate it,) what pretensions can an ignorant person have, however pious, to explain this book? Illiterate piety may be useful in exhorting sinners to return to God, and pointing out, in a general way, the path that leads to God by Christ; but it certainly cannot, without immediate inspiration, explain and apply

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the deep things of God. I am not ſpeaking now of that learning which is the reſult of a proper acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek, the original languages in which the ſacred writings were given by God to man: No. I am referring to that literature which any man of good common ſenſe, may, by proper application, acquire from writings which abound in his mother tongue. Yet I would not be thought to diſcourage thoſe other purſuits: I think it is of great conſequence to a preacher of the goſpel to be able to read the old and new covenants of his God, in thoſe languages in which they were originally given. But ſhould I inſinuate that this is at all *neceſſary*, I ſhould offend ſome of the generation of his children, who, not through envy, but ignorance of their utility, ſpeak againſt the acquirement of theſe languages. It is well if ſuch do not ſpend more time in unneceſſary viſits, and unimportant letter-writing, than would be requiſite to learn all the Hebrew and Chaldee of the Old Teſtament. I have often adviſed *young men* to devote a part of their time in this way: but though I have known many who have *begun*, yet I have not been ſo happy as to find one who had ſtrength and determination of mind ſufficient to bring his ſtudies to any profitable concluſion. However, this I have known, that while they employed themſelves in this way, they were ſaved from tea-drinking viſits, and the various ſnares which thoſe who frequent them generally fall into. This was, ſo far, clear gain.

Don't be afraid of *philoſophy*; i. e. *the love of wiſdom*. Some have taken upon themſelves to ſpeak againſt this, who neither underſtand its name nor its nature; and who, being of a lazy, indolent habit, wiſh hereby to excuſe and ſanction their oſcitancy and ſlothfulneſs. Purſuits of the utmoſt importance to the miniſterial character and ſucceſs, are termed by theſe, *dry ſtudies*: becauſe *they* know not how

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to ſtudy: they cannot ſtudy to any good purpoſe; they refer not all to *one end*—viz. God's glory in the increaſe of their own ſalvation, and their uſefulneſs among men. What is the conſequence? Why, they idle away that time which is an invaluable gift of God; and either ſleep away their moments, or become what one juſtly terms, "the moſt deteſtable of all negatively ſinful characters, *ſmoakers of tobacco.*" There are ſome who ſmoak and ſtudy too: the latter they ſhould do, and leave the former undone. But theſe are angels in compariſon of him who reads little, ſtudies none, and is continually at the pipe.

The *indolent* preacher is ſoon known by his preaching: he has little or no *variety*. *He* cannot bring out of his treaſury things both *new* and *old*: alas for him! *treaſury* he has none; *his* coffers are all empty.

Whatever his other increaſe may be, he increaſes not in biblical knowledge: the knowledge which is neceſſary to explain, defend, and apply the word of God. A man of this ſtamp preaches now, juſt as he preached twenty or thirty years ago, on the ſame text.—It is exactly the ſame diſcourſe, without the acceſſion of a ſingle *new idea!* What! has not the man got his eyes a little farther opened to behold wonders in God's law? In him, is there no increaſe in the grace and gift of preaching? Is not light ſown for the righteous; and if that ſeed had been well watered, would it not have brought forth fruit? Certainly it would. Is this no crime before God? Is it no ſin againſt his people? Has not the great Shepherd promiſed his flock that he will give them *paſtors after his own heart, who will feed them with knowledge?* How can ſuch perſons anſwer to God, for the non-improvement of the powers he has graciouſly given them?

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But, "you fear leſt, while ſeeking after knowledge, you ſhould loſe your ſimplicity, and your reliſh for divine things; and it is better to have religion without knowledge, than knowledge without religion." There is, I grant, a kind of knowledge which puffs up; but this is that knowledge which is ſhallow in itſelf, is ſought *out* of God, and refers not its attainments to *him:* but that knowledge which has for its objects *God* and his *works*, can never rob you of your religion, nor deprive you of your ſimplicity; but, on the contrary, will be a powerful mean of increaſing both. True knowledge ever keeps its poſſeſſor *humble*; becauſe it alone ſhews him how much is to be known, and how little he has learned. However, I ſcruple not to ſay, that, as mere knowledge is of no uſe to the ſoul, while *poſſeſſed*, without religion; ſo religion is diſcredited while *profeſſed*, without knowledge. But, "you deſpair of making any progreſs, becauſe there is ſo much to be learned." The well of *ſcience*, as well as that of *religion*, is exceedingly deep, I grant; but where the water is ſo abundant, ſome may be carried away; and remember, for your encouragement, the Aſiatic proverb: "Partial knowledge, is better than total ignorance: he, therefore, who cannot underſtand every thing, ſhould learn what he can."

In our caſe, candour will make allowances for partial ignorance, becauſe of our ſuppoſed diſadvantageous circumſtances: For ſuch allowances we ſhould be duly grateful: but I am fully of opinion, our circumſtances are not of that diſadvantageous nature, which at firſt view might appear. We have abundant opportunities of gaining knowledge, of the moſt excellent and uſeful kind: the knowledge of God's work, and the knowledge of human nature. We travel about every where; ſee perſons in almoſt every ſituation in life; and may acquaint ourſelves

ſelves, if not inexcuſably indolent or deplorably ſtupid, with moſt of the exiſting and poſſible varieties of *men* and *things*. This is knowledge gained by *experience*; the *truth* of whoſe principles you will have the opportunity of ſeeing continually evinced, by their being brought into conſtant action.

Ignorance is one of the products of the Fall; and, like all other faults of human nature, the mind is ſtrongly wedded to it: ſo that though light is come into the world, men love darkneſs rather than light. — Some really ſeem to love ignorance even for its own ſake; and think knowledge to be a very dangerous thing. Indeed, ſome have gone ſo far as to inſinuate, that thoſe who endeavour to cultivate their minds, neceſſarily loſe their zeal for God's glory, and the ſalvation of their ſouls. Thus the truly infamous maxim of that diſgrace to God and nature, the church of Rome, *Ignorance is the mother of devotion*, is attempted to be ſet up!—By whom? I am afraid by a Methodiſt Preacher!—Where? In a letter in the Methodiſt Magazine?—Directed to whom?—To one of the moſt venerable fathers of our church; who, to his own great honour and the edification of thouſands, has taken more ſucceſsful pains to cultivate his mind, than the whole tribe of thoſe who are continually (in ſelf-defence) ringing the *goth* and *vandal* changes, on the popiſh *eulogium* of *ignorance!* If ſuch perſons be in the prime of life, and do not ſpeedily acquire an affection for cloſe reading and ſtudy, I would not venture much for the title of an eſtate, the emoluments of which ſhould be continued to me only during the *ſtability* of their religion. To the utter confuſion of all ſuch perſons, it might be eaſily proved, that there is a very intimate connection between vital godlineſs and a ſtudious cultivation of a man's mind: but, as far as heaven is from earth, ſo far are lounging and ſlothfulneſs diſtant from true religion.

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You muſt never forget, that our congregations are at preſent far more *intelligent* than they formerly were. If this were not the caſe, it would be a proof that God had never ſent *us*: but as it is ſo, it is much to the credit of our miniſtry; for it proves that God has bleſſed it:—It proves that ſound knowledge, civilization, and genuine piety have marched with us hand in hand all over the nation. But that which paſſed formerly in the day-break of our revival, will not paſs now:—The people are more enlightened; they have grown up in religious knowledge under our miniſtry; and they now require ſtronger nouriſhment. By earneſt application to God by prayer, and diligent cultivation of our minds, we ſhould keep the *diſtance* before them we had in the beginning: we have formerly led *babes* in knowledge, we muſt now miniſter to *young men* and *fathers*. Therefore, we ſhould be in the moſt extenſive manner ſtewards of the myſteries of Chriſt, and patriarchs in knowledge.

To conclude on this point. I earneſtly adviſe you to begin, continue, and end all your works and ſtudies in the name and to the glory of God. Never neglect to viſit the ſick; and be ſure you go wherever you are aſked. Every ſtudy and every gratification ſhould be ſacrificed to the performance of your miniſterial duty: but you will have time enough for all, if you huſband it properly. Divide your time for your work, and arrange your work to your time; and let not one part of your buſineſs break in upon another.

VII. *Concerning Marriage.*

I feel little encouragement to hazard any advice upon this ſubject: in general, people do not in this matter conſult their judgment, nor receive the counſel of their

friends: but act according to the impulse of their own passions. It is almost the only case in the concerns of human life where reason and prudence are obliged to be inactive; and where they are, notwithstanding, most interested. However, a *christian* should act otherwise: and a christian minister who is not delivered out of the hands of his own passions, is a disgrace to the sacred character he bears. I was always an advocate for marriage; and as I have tried that state for nearly twelve years, and have been blessed with a good wife, and with ten children, it is no wonder that I should continue to recommend it. I say, by all means get married; for I am satisfied that no man can be truly comfortable who lives a single life. But remember, your everlasting all may depend upon the choice you make. Seek for genuine piety — nothing can compensate for the lack of this: Look for sound sense and an agreeable manner — that while your wife is a *help* to you, she may not by her awkward behaviour be disgusting to others. Good natural tempers are of great consequence. Get a wife who possessed these before she was brought to God: and, should she at any time lose ground in religion, her good natural disposition will still remain, and your comfort will not be materially interrupted. But when a woman who has had bad natural tempers, loses that life of God by which they were controlled or kept at bay, she becomes intolerable. Avoid a person of this character, though as rich as Cræsus, and as beautiful as an angel. Let the person be nearly of your own age. A young man marrying an *old woman*, and an old man marrying a *child*, are both an abomination to the Lord. Your wife should ever be considered as your *equal*, and therefore should not be of such an age in reference to you, as might demand the respect of a *mother*, or the correction of a *child*. Don't seek for money: It is a shocking reproach to a man of God,

God, to be hunting after pelf, and getting a wife merely for the ſake of her poſſeſſions. I ſcruple not to ſay, that thoſe who marry for money, are committing adultery as long as they live. I ſay nothing concerning beauty, &c. but would juſt obſerve, that a man who is himſelf of a homely appearance ſhould not be nice in the choice of a wife; and, that a pious, ſenſible woman of a good natural diſpoſition, be ſhe ever ſo ordinary, is an ineſtimable treaſure. Beware of a woman that meddles with politics, or with the government of the church of God. Such an one cannot fail to embroil you with the people, wherever you go; and will be a ſource of miſery to you as long as you breathe.

I need lay down no rules for your treatment of your wife: becauſe, if you love her as you ought, you will ever treat her well; and, if you do not love her, rules and directions would be mere cobwebs to you. One thing I muſt ſay, that when you are in company, you ſhould pay as much attention to your wife as to any perſon preſent; avoiding at the ſame time that puerile monkey-iſh fooling and toying which is a diſgrace to a man, and an inſult to a ſenſible woman.

Abul Fazl, author of the *Ayar Daniſh*, (Touchſtone of Wiſdom) gives the following advice to a perſon who was going to marry: "Take (ſays he) the daughter of a religious, friendly man, whom you may make your confidant on all occaſions. But have nothing to ſay to three kinds of women — 1. A widow, if ſhe be always extolling her deceaſed huſband. 2. A woman whoſe relations have conferred great favours upon you. 3. And one who, whenever ſhe ſees you, ſpeaks in a faint tone, and affects a delicate languid air." Theſe advices ſhew an intimate acquaintance with human nature; and are ſo full of good ſenſe and meaning, that a volume might be written on without exhauſting them.

If ever God ſhould bleſs you with children, ſee that you dedicate them unreſervedly to him. Never dreſs them in the faſhion: i. e. the unmeaning, unneceſſary, and abſurd foppery of the times. Give them no *red* ſhoes, *glaring* buttons, &c. This fills them with pride, and debaſes their minds; for by this mode of conduct they are taught to attach a value to things which are of no intrinſic worth; and, falſe perceptions and ideas impreſſed upon the mind in ſo tender an age, are rarely obliterated through the whole courſe of life.

Never take them out with you to dine, &c. for the following reaſons: 1. Becauſe they are generally too much indulged by getting food which in *quantity* and *quality* is injurious to their health. 2. Being treated better abroad than at home, neceſſary domeſtic reſtraint becomes irkſome to them, and they would rather be any where elſe than in their parents' houſe. 3. By being too much indulged among ſtrangers, they acquire too great a degree of forwardneſs; which, for lack of judgment, often degenerates into intolerable impudence. 4. They give great trouble to the families where they come; by which you cannot fail being brought into contempt, eſpecially when you make it a cuſtom to take them where they are neither aſked nor deſired. As directions of this nature are not yet requiſite for you, this will plead my excuſe for not entering ſo deeply into this matter as its nature and importance might demand.

VIII. *My eighth and laſt Advice ſhall be concerning the Care you ſhould take of your Health.*

On this point it would be eaſy to give many advices of the utmoſt conſequence. But what ſignifies the beſt directions when it is impoſſible to attend to them? You

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are encompaſſed with difficulties; and every part of the glorious work in which you are engaged, is unfriendly to that life which you have devoted to God, and to the ſervice of his church. From the nature of your work, you muſt be unavoidably expoſed to all kinds of weather: — Damp houſes, bad beds, innutritious food, and a terrible catalogue of *et cætera*. The bad effects of theſe you may endeavour in ſome meaſure to counteract, or to ſuſpend for a time: but you cannot ultimately prevent them from hurrying you into eternity. Whatever deference I may feel myſelf inclined to pay to the aſſertion of a great man, viz. That a *Miniſter of the Goſpel is immortal till his work is done:* yet I am ſatisfied, that he who preaches the Goſpel as he ought, will unavoidably ſooner or later become a *martyr* to his work.

The beſt I can ſay to you on this ſubject is, Never join hands with your unfavourable circumſtances to injure your conſtitution and haſten your death. Concerning that abominable and fatal *drain* of human life, the *pipe* and the *quid*, I need here ſay nothing. My opinion has long ſince been before the public. I am ſorry to ſay that I know ſeveral young men who are to this day murdering themſelves in this way — but they are by me incorrigible; I leave them in the hands of God, and ſay to you, never imitate them.

If you regard your health, never ſuffer your bed to be *warmed*. This is a ſpecies of needleſs ſelf-indulgence, which is a ſcandal to the character of a *man*. If you ſuſpect the bed to be *damp*, then let it be aired with a pan or two of coals; but be ſure you turn the cloaths down, and let it cool at leaſt two hours before you lie down. Never ſleep in a damp bed:—This is certain death, eſpecially to a delicate conſtitution. Fifteen years ago I lay in a damp bed at Beer-Alſton, in Devonſhire:

vonſhire: for ſeveral months after, I was at death's door: through mercy I recovered a little, but got a very bad cough through it, from which I have not been one day free from that time until now: and have every reaſon to believe, that ſhould all other mortal cauſes be inactive, that alone will give me an untimely grave. If you perceive the ſheets to be damp, take them immediately off, and lie with your ſtockings and waiſtcoat on, between the blankets. Do not keep the ſame ſhirt on during the day in which you have ſlept the preceding night: the matter of inſenſible perſpiration is expelled from the body becauſe it is noxious, and cannot be reabſorbed without doing the conſtitution great injury; and reabſorbed it muſt be if you continue to wear the ſame linen you ſlept in all night.

Never dry your wet cloaths while you have them on: this is very injurious. If you have no change of raiment, (and it often happens that a Methodiſt Preacher has but one coat) walk in the open air till they are dry, or go to bed that they may be dried at the fire. But by all means keep from the fire while they are upon you; otherwiſe, the heat cauſing the wet to retire before it, will ſtrike it into the ſkin, produce immediate obſtructions, and prove the parent of many miſeries.

Never take that food which does not agree with you, however well you may reliſh it. Drink no ſpirituous liquors, nor poor, bad table-beer. Water, in which a toaſt has been ſteeped, and covered for an hour, is beyond all compariſon more nutritive and more wholeſome than either. Waſh your face, hands, and feet often: and neglect not every morning to rinſe your mouth with cold water, and to cleanſe your teeth well with a ſoft bruſh. He that begins this cuſtom early, and continues in it, will never have the tooth-ache. If you have a bad digeſtion, or ſhould

your

your meat lie ordinarily heavy upon your ſtomach, obſerve the following rules: Never eat to repletion; leave off while you have an appetite for more; and let not a morſel of any kind of food enter into your ſtomach till you have chewed it as ſmall as poſſible: this ſaves the ſtomach at leaſt one half of its ordinary labour; and remember, what all ſhould know, and what few properly obſerve, that it is for this very end that the God of nature gave you your *teeth*. Many uſe their teeth to make their food juſt ſmall enough to be ſwallowed, and culpably leave the whole proceſs of maſtication to be performed in the ſtomach. No wonder that ſuch are troubled with flatulencies, indigeſtion, and many other evils. Never eat your food too warm; nor drink any kind of hot ſlops: — theſe exceedingly weaken the ſtomach, and prevent it from performing its proper functions.

It is of vaſt conſequence to have the *feces* expelled from the body as ſoon as nature indicates the neceſſity of it. On this delicate ſubject I muſt obſerve that the feces being too long retained, grow corrupt, irritate the inteſtines, and produce a morbid alteration in the mucus which lines their internal ſurface. The abſorbents from the preternatural diſtention of the veſſels into which they open, become abundantly more active; and, taking up the morbid matter, return it to the blood; where, circulating with the whole maſs, it lays the foundation of incalculable miſchief. Sometimes, by long retention of the feces, the extreme ſtate of tenſion in which the nerves have been held renders them paralytic, ſo that the muſcles to which they were diſtributed become incapable of obeying the dictates of neceſſity; hence neither the ſolid nor fluid feces can be expelled. The *ſphincter* muſcles being kept long in a violent ſtate of contraction, loſe their elaſtic power. At other times a

contrary

contrary effect is produced: the paralytic affection is so great, that the muscles become so completely relaxed, that the feces cannot be retained for the ordinary time: hence *diabetes* and similar complaints. Most persons, after having suffered much through too long a retention of urine, have found the torment they at first experienced abate: and, when a convenient time offered, have fruitlessly endeavoured to obey a command which nature no longer urged. What was the reason?—Why, either nature (of two evils chusing the least) had caused the matter which could be no longer retained in its proper place, to be taken up by the absorbent vessels and thrown back into the blood; or the long-contracted muscles had now lost their distensive capacity, and the matter could not be expelled.

I have proved this often through an obstinate attachment to some particular study, and through false delicacy. That I might be able fully to ascertain this matter, and the more effectually to warn others, even at my own expense, I have voluntarily submitted to repeat these experiments on myself. I can in consequence say, I advance no hypothesis on this subject; and wish, that all who read this paper would rather take my word for the fact than submit to the trial. I have only one remark to make on this subject: that, in respect to the urine, the absorbent vessels never take it up and return it into the circulation till the vessel in which it is lodged has been distended by a supernatural quantity to its utmost capacity. Then, the absorbents becoming more active by pressure, take up the whole and restore it to the blood in a very short time. I need not tell you that this matter was secreted from the blood at first because it was injurious to *it*, and to the whole system; and, that returning such a quantity back into the circulation, must produce the most melancholy

effects.

effects. Who has not heard of the tragical death of the famous *Tycho Brahé?* Being in a carriage with the Emperor Rodolphe II. his falſe delicacy forbad him to obey the urgent demands of nature; and the conſequence was, the *premature* death of one of the greateſt philoſophers in the univerſe.*

Theſe may appear to be ſmall things; but they are matters of the utmoſt importance. A conſtipation of the bowels, a ſtricture of the urethra, a diabetes, a contamination of the whole maſs of blood, are dreadful evils which careleſſneſs in the above reſpects may eaſily procure, and which due attention to the imperious voice of nature may fully prevent.

You perceive I have recommended no medicine: 1ſt. Becauſe none but an empiric would recommend any but in the preſence of the diſorder, after having conſidered the ſtate of the conſtitution, the combinations of diſeaſe, and a variety of local circumſtances which might make the ſame mode of treatment improper in one caſe, the uſefulneſs of which was ſtrongly indicated in another. 2d. Becauſe I am not writing about the *reſtoration* of health, but about its *preſervation*. And 3dly. Becauſe I believe nature, if ſhe get fair play, will require very little medical aſſiſtance.

Let not nature be impeded in the proceſs of her work — Let her never be obliged to carry a *burthen* of meat, drink, or cloaths — Keep your head in general cool by day, and moderately warm by night — See that your feet be always moderately warm and dry; and avoid all quack medicines as you would the peſtilence. Let your *moderation* in all things be known unto all; the Lord is at hand. Finally. As your life, from

* There are ſome very excellent obſervations on this head in that invaluable tract of Mr. Tiſſot, entitled, *De la Santé des gens de Lettres.*

the nature of your work muſt hang ſo conſtantly in doubt, live for eternity, and be every moment prepared to meet your God. Let this be your motto, and let your heart *feel* that it is true,

For me to live is Chriſt; to die, is gain.

I leave theſe Advices with you, and earneſtly commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them who are ſanctified; and, am affectionately,

Your companion in tribulation,

And in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus,

ADAM CLARKE.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

YOU wiſh to know my opinion concerning the Preachers in general, their attainments, grace, &c. As I am but of *yeſterday*, my opinion can be entitled to comparatively little attention. Yet as I have taken ſome pains to form it, and you wiſh to know it, it cannot be unacceptable to *you*. The abilities of a workman are beſt known by his work: judging in this way, I conceive the Preachers in general to be a moſt extraordinary body of men. The work that is performed by their miniſtry, is, (I ſpeak I truſt with a pure conſcience) the moſt extenſive, and the moſt glorious of which I have ever heard or read. Now I judge, if theſe men were not very high in God's favour, he could not bleſs their work in ſo eminent a manner: and if they did not in general ſo walk as to pleaſe him, they could not ſtand ſo high in his favour. Therefore, I conclude, that the great body of Preachers, is a body of eminently uſeful and holy men, whoſe great actuating ſoul, is the Spirit of the Moſt High. I think I know the Preachers as well as any man in the connection: for I have made it a ſacred point to hear all their preaching, both evening and morning, at every Conference I have attended for many years. And after having ſeriouſly conſidered the *matter* and *manner* of their preaching, I ſcruple not to aſſert that they are (for pure doctrine, good ſound ſenſe, various knowledge, and impreſſive natural eloquence) at leaſt equal to any body of miniſters I know in the nation. And I

am satisfied, that nothing but the glorious *strictness* of their doctrine and discipline, prevents them from being the most popular Preachers in the land. "But is there not a *declension* of the work? And on your own ground, does not this prove that there is a *defect* in the workmen?" If I could credit the premises, I must certainly admit the conclusion. But I cannot. I have been nearly eighteen years a travelling Preacher: I have had every part of the work under my eye in many of the little places, and in some of the greatest. I have diligently consulted all the records of our revival; I have compared the former with the present times: and rigid impartial justice obliges me to draw the following conclusion — The work of God among the Methodists is at present, abundantly more extensive, more scriptural, more rational, and at least as *deep* as it has been from the beginning. I judge thus from what I have seen, from what I know, and from what I have read. Whatever has been suggested *against* the holiness and usefulness of the Preachers, and the extent and purity of the work, by individuals among ourselves, or by any others, (comparing the former with the present times;) I religiously believe to be utterly unfounded. And while I magnify the grace of the Lord Jesus towards us, I heartily pray that we may exceed our former selves, and walk more and more worthy the vocation wherewith we are called!

BRISTOL, *May 20th*, 1800.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

A few Directions to the People relative to their profiting by the miniſtry of the Word.

FATHERS, AND BRETHREN,

HAVING ventured through the medium of a junior brother, to give ſeveral Advices to the Preachers, both local and travelling, relative to their ſucceſs in declaring the teſtimonies of the Moſt High: I ſhall now take the liberty of giving a few directions to you: how you may hear theſe Preachers ſo as to be profited.

You will readily grant with me, that if the people do not hear in a proper ſpirit, the moſt eminent and faithful miniſters may preach in vain. Let it be ever remembered that the great Biſhop of ſouls, the Lord Jeſus, who had every miniſterial qualification in abſolute perfection, preached the everlaſting goſpel to many who were not profited by it: and that he departed from a certain place in which he could do no mighty works, becauſe of the people's unbelief. In this caſe it is manifeſt, that the fault could not be in the Preacher, nor in the matter of his diſcourſes, but in the hearers only. The grand buſineſs therefore of the people is, to inquire in the moſt ſerious manner, how they are to hear ſo as to be ſaved?

1. Endeavour to get your minds deeply impreſſed with the value of the miniſtry of God's word. One of the

the moſt terrible judgments which God ever inflicted on the unfaithful Jews, was, hiding their Preachers in a corner, and producing a famine of the bread of life — ſee Amos viii. 11, 12, 13.

2. If poſſible, get a few minutes for private prayer *before* you go to the houſe of God, that you may ſupplicate his throne for a bleſſing on your own ſoul, and on the congregation.

3. When you get to the chapel, conſider it as the houſe of God, the dwelling place of the Moſt High: That he is there to bleſs his people, and that you cannot pleaſe him better than by being willing to receive the abundant bleſſings which he is ready to communicate.

4. Mingle all your hearing with prayer. When the Preacher mentions any of the threatenings of God's law, beg the Lord to avert them: when he mentions the promiſes, pray God inſtantly to fulfil them. When he deſcribes what a chriſtian ſhould be, determine to ſet out afreſh; and let your heart immediately purpoſe in the ſtrength of God to give up every evil way, and to follow Jeſus.

5. Hear with faith. Receive the ſcriptures as *the words of God:* and remember that you are not come to the chapel to reaſon about them, but to credit them. God ſpeaks, and his own authority gives abſolute credibility to all that he ſays. Whatever he promiſes he is able and willing to perform: and if the bleſſing promiſed be requiſite to you *now*; then, now, this moment is the time in which God is determined to give it — here, nothing can hinder, nothing injure you but your unbelief.

6. Receive the Preacher as the ambaſſador of God, ſent particularly to *you* with a meſſage of ſalvation — Liſten attentively to every part of the ſermon: — there is

a portion

a portion for *you* ſomewhere in it, hear *all* and you are ſure to diſcern what belongs to yourſelf.

7. Don't ſuppoſe that you know even all the outlines of the plan of ſalvation: there is a heighth, length, breadth, and depth in the things of God, of which you have as yet but a very inadequate conception. Every ſermon will be a mean of diſcovering more and more of the wonders of God's grace to you, if you hear it in a proper ſpirit.

8. Do not think that this or the other Preacher cannot inſtruct you. He may be, comparatively ſpeaking, a *weak* Preacher: but the meaneſt of God's ſending will at all times be directed to bring ſomething to the wiſeſt and holieſt chriſtians which they have not fully known or enjoyed before. You do not depend upon the man's abilities: if he be a Preacher of God's making, he is God's mouth, and by him the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of unerring counſel, of infinite wiſdom, and eternal love will ſpeak to you.

9. Never abſent yourſelf from the houſe of God when you can poſſibly attend. Remember it is God that invites you, not to hear this or the other man; but to hear *him* through his meſſenger, that you may be ſaved. Therefore, go to hear God ſpeak, and let who will be the Preacher, you ſhall never be diſappointed.

10. Conſider how great the bleſſing is which you enjoy. What would a damned ſoul give for the privilege of ſitting five minutes in your place, to hear *Jeſus* preached, with the ſame poſſibility of being ſaved?

11. Don't divide the word with your neighbour: hear for yourſelf: ſhare your cloaths, money, bread, &c. with him, but don't divide the word preached: it belongs to you;—it belongs to him:—every man may have his

his part by himſelf, but no man can hear for another. It is your enemy who ſays to you, "That ſuits ſuch and ſuch perſons." It ſuits *you* perhaps more than them: if they are there, let them take it to themſelves: you are not your brother's keeper: if they are not there, you have no buſineſs with them.

12. Conſider, this may be the laſt ſermon you ſhall ever be permitted to hear! Therefore, hear it as if it were your laſt; and you will hear it then to your unſpeakable profit. O hear for eternity at all times: remember the eye of God is upon you.

13. Conſider, your being *bleſt* does not conſiſt in your remembering heads, diviſions, &c. but in feeling the divine influence, having your eyes enlightened to ſee more of the worth of Chriſt, and the neceſſities of your own ſoul:—in having your heart invigorated with divine ſtrength, and your ſoul more determined to follow on to know the Lord.

14. Don't deſpiſe or reject the miniſtry, becauſe it is not ſo excellent in every reſpect as you could wiſh. Be thankful that God gives it to you ſuch as it is: and remember, if he gave bleſſings according to your deſerts, and according to your improvement, they would be ſuch as would ſcarcely deſerve to be ſought for, or received when found.

15. If you believe the Preacher to be a holy man of God, don't find fault with him: you may depend upon it he feels his ſoul at ſtake, and while he is in that awful place, the pulpit, ſtrives with all the ſincerity of his heart, to do that ſolemn work in the very beſt way he can, and to the uttermoſt of his power.

16. After the ſermon is over, get as ſpeedily home as you can, and ſpend a few moments on your knees in

private,

private, earneſtly beſeeching God to write indelibly on your heart what you have been hearing.

17. Meditate on what you have heard: — At firſt, divine ideas may be but ſlightly impreſſed — a little meditation often ſerves to deepen this impreſſion: therefore do not immediately begin to talk with any of your friends and acquaintance; the mind that was before collected in itſelf to meditate on what was heard, becomes hereby diſtracted; and the fowls of the air pick up the good ſeed.

18. As your Preachers have many trials peculiar to their work, which you cannot *know*, and probably could not *bear* were they laid upon you; take heed how you increaſe their load. Satan will haraſs them ſufficiently: O let not God's people join iſſue with the great adverſary, to diſtreſs the hearts of their teachers.

19. They have left *all* for your ſakes and for the ſake of the goſpel: and if this *all* were only the anvil, the plough, the fiſhing boat, or the carpenter's bench, it was their *all*, and the all they got their bread comfortably by; and he who has nothing but a net, and leaves that for the ſake of doing good to the ſouls of men, leaves *his* ALL: and remember, that in becoming the ſervant of all for Chriſt's ſake, he often expoſes himſelf to the want of even a morſel of bread. Let the *proud* and the *profane* exult and ſay, "ſuch preachers cannot be much injured by their ſacrifice of ſecular property; though they have left their *all*, that *all* was of little worth." Stop friend, and take this maxim with you that it may moderate your glorying: That man forſakes *much* who reſerves *nothing* to himſelf: and who renounces all expectations from this world, taking what *you* would not truſt to, *God alone*, for his *portion*. It is readily granted that the Preacher is a poor man, and

you are rich. But did he not enter into the world with as good proſpects as you had? and has not God furniſhed him with as much common ſenſe, ſound judgment, and other neceſſary accompliſhments for buſineſs as you have ever poſſeſſed? Had theſe been employed in trade, is there not a million to one he had been this day as rich as you are? And had God honoured you with his vocation, and you had been as faithful and upright in it as he has been, would not you have been the poor man which to-day you deſpiſe? Think of this and be humble.

20. Pray for your Preachers, that God may fill them with the unction of his Spirit, and make them meſſengers of peace to you. While Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moſes, the Iſraelites prevailed over their enemies.

Before I conclude, ſhall I be permitted to add one thing more? Perhaps it may come better from one who has buried his comfortable proſpects of this world, and who has reaſon to believe from his increaſing infirmities that he ſhall not long be permitted to be either a bleſſing or a burden to mankind. Then I ſay, make your Preachers comfortable. Men who have taken the other world for their inheritance, will expect no more than the bare neceſſaries of life in this. Let the Stewards of every Society examine the proviſion which is made for their Preachers and families: conſider the *time* in which it was fixed, the *depreciation* of money, and the enormous *advance* in every article of conſumption: and by comparing the requiſite expenditure of the family in queſtion with that of their own, allowing for the deſcending or aſcending proportions, let them determine on ſuch a proviſion as their prudence and piety may dictate. From a pretty general acquaintance with the

the Methodiſts, I can confidently aſſert, that wherever there is a deficiency of ſupport for the Preachers and their families, it is where the Societies are utterly ignorant of the matter; for wherever ſuch grievances are brought before them, they are inſtantly redreſſed. There are very few Preachers who will complain, let them ſuffer what they may: The Societies commit the buſineſs into the hands of the Stewards; they ſhould not wait for complaint or information from the Preacher; but inveſtigate every circumſtance themſelves. To ſuch I ſay, and to all who are concerned with them, never ſuffer through your neglect, worldly cares to intrude themſelves into the cloſets and hearts of the men who are labouring for your ſalvation. How can he preach comfort who is not comforted? And how can he be comforted, who has preſſing wants in his family, which he has no power to relieve? Give his children bread, and the man of God will cheerfully lay down his life in his work; and when he is gone to his God and your God, you will be enabled without compunction of heart to ſay; He is gone! gone to live with God; the man who preached unto us JESUS, by whoſe miniſtry we were bleſt, and to whoſe neceſſities we had the privilege of contributing: we ſhall ſoon rejoin him where the whole heavenly family ſhall know each other in the light of their God! Even ſo Lord Jeſus!

That we may all ſo *preach*, and *hear* as to glorify God and be finally ſaved, is the ſincere prayer of your affectionate ſervant in the goſpel of Chriſt,

ADAM CLARKE.

A. CLARKE takes the preſent opportunity to inform his Friends and the Public, that he has been obliged to poſtpone the printing of his Commentary on the New Teſtament, partly through lack of health, but principally through the extraordinary dearneſs of paper. Had he publiſhed it at the time he intended, the high price of the paper and other matters, would have obliged him to have added nearly one third to the price: and this neither his own feelings, nor the *ſtate of the times*, could by any means juſtify. However, as the firſt volume has been long prepared, he hopes to take the firſt favourable opportunity of committing it to the preſs.

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By ADAM CLARKE.

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